

# THEATRE APPRECIATION

## THE2000 – Fall 2023

MON & WED: 1:55 PM-2:45 (Turlington L007)  
FRI (breakout session): Check your schedule for time and location

Professor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell  
Office: McGuire Pavilion, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, room 229  
(This building is attached to the Reitz Union.)  
Office Phone: (352) 273-0515  
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:30-4:00  
Email: cmitchell@ufl.edu

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to expose you to live theatre so that you will better appreciate its complexities and cultural importance. Over the course of the semester, you will look behind the scenes in order to explore the collaborative processes that make it work. In addition to studying some of the literature, theories, history, forms, and styles of theatre, you will explore how influences such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and economic class shape the experience of theatre in the United States. You will also learn to write and speak critically about theatrical production. This course fulfills a general education and diversity requirement.

### GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. In-class lectures will provide the framework for understanding the theatrical arts and how they connect to the human experience. Additional instruction will come through textbook and play reading augmented by the watching of live theatre.

### GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES FOR DIVERSITY

Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. These courses encourage students to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups. Students are expected to analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups. Lectures will emphasize the struggles and theatrical contributions of marginalized groups while the reading and discussion of assigned plays by “hyphenated” Americans will provide a context for understanding how cultural differences have been negotiated in this country.

### GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline.

**Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline.

**Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Student learning outcomes will be assessed in various ways. Exams and quizzes on assigned readings will test mastery of content. Communication and critical thinking will be tested through the writing of papers that critique live performance, creative projects that interpret the symbology of theatrical texts, and performance in class discussions.

## REQUIREMENTS

- You will do a close reading of all plays and supplemental material. There will be several quizzes given throughout the semester based on your reading.
- You will see three specific shows and write a critique about each one. I will post guidelines on Canvas.
- You will complete two creative homework assignments. I will post guidelines.
- There will be three exams and a final based on the lectures and assigned reading. I will provide a topic list a few days before an exam. I do not give early exams to accommodate your travel plans - *no exceptions*. Exam dates are provided on the Course Outline. Make your family aware of exam dates before they make travel plans.

## REQUIRED PLAYS

All of the following texts should be available in the bookstore:

*Theatrical Worlds*, ed. Charlie Mitchell  
ISBN: 1616101660 - University Press of Florida

I developed this book in response to the high cost of theatre textbooks. A free pdf version is available at <https://opensourcetheatretextbook.wordpress.com/> However, many students find that a physical copy is easier to read and study so a print version will be available in the bookstore.

*Fat Pig* by Neil LaBute  
ISBN: ISBN: 057121150X - Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
Note: There is a Kindle version on Amazon

*Fences* by August Wilson  
ISBN: 0452264014 – Plume  
Note: There is a Kindle version on Amazon

*Blood at the Root* by Dominique Morisseau  
ISBN: 0573705143 – Samuel French

*Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell  
ISBN: 9781854592118 - Nick Hern Books  
Note: There is Kindle version on Amazon

*Anna in the Tropics* by Nilo Cruz  
ISBN: 0822220008 – Dramatist Play Service  
Note: The publisher has an ePub version

*Yellowface* by David Henry Hwang  
ISBN: 9781559363402 – Theatre Communications Group  
Note: There is Kindle version on Amazon

*The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman  
ISBN: 0375727191 – Vintage Books  
Note: There is Kindle version on Amazon

*Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* by Yussef El Guindi  
ISBN: 088145754X - Broadway Play Publishing  
Note: The publisher has an ePlay (pdf) version.

You can purchase *any* edition of these plays from any source but get them *at the beginning of the semester*. After a few weeks, unsold books in the campus bookstore are returned to the publishers. There is no valid excuse for not locating a copy of the play, including waiting for third party vendors. In this course, we will cover material that you may find controversial or challenging. If you have had personal experiences or beliefs that might seriously affect your participation, I encourage you to read about the required plays above before continuing in this course.

## **CANVAS**

Grades, additional readings, paper/homework guidelines, and topic lists for exams will be posted on the class website in Canvas. Log on to <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>, click the orange button that reads “LOG IN TO E-LEARNING,” and then enter your Gatorlink username and password. This course should appear if you are officially registered. If you require technical assistance with your computer, start with the UF Computing Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>.

## **REQUIRED PERFORMANCES**

For this class, you are required to see three shows which will be the basis for three short papers and may also be the topic of some exam questions. You will be given a coupon which you will trade for a ticket. The exact process will be explained in class.

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS and TA's**

Every week on Friday (see your schedule), your section will meet in a different classroom with one of my teaching assistants (TA's). During these sessions, you will discuss assigned reading, do activities, or take exams. When discussing plays, you are expected to bring the text to class and share your opinions and observations.

At the end of the semester, your TA will assign you a grade in Participation (see "Grade Breakdown"). This grade will reflect your degree of involvement in breakout sessions. This means that simply showing up to class is not enough to earn an A in Participation. If you have any questions about the course in general, course material, or exams, feel free to contact me. If you have questions about missing or incorrect grades, contact your TA.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are expected to attend all lectures and breakout sessions. A sign-in sheet will be passed around to confirm your attendance. Signing in for another student violates the Honor Code. You are responsible for all material covered. If you miss a class, get the notes from a friend. I do not provide notes or PowerPoint slides unless it is mandated by the DRC.

The following attendance policy begins the first day after the add/drop period. You can miss two *unexcused* classes without penalty. Your third unexcused absence will automatically assure that the highest grade you can receive in Participation is a B. Four unexcused absences will drop it to a C, and ***five unexcused absences will earn you a failing grade for the entire course.***

The following absences are excused: illness (doctor's note required), religious holidays, funerals (no documentation required), and participation in official university activities (documentation required). Weddings, job interviews, job fairs, and other life events do not count as excused absences. If you have a logistical problem that is preventing you from arriving to class on time, notify your TA immediately. Being late three times equals one absence. Share all attendance documentation with your TA.

*Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>*

### **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Three Exams	45%
Production Critiques	15%
Quizzes	15%
Final Exam	10%
Participation	10% (assigned by your TA)
Homework (2)	5%

I do not curve grades or drop low grades. I round up final grades by .5 only.

### **SCALE**

A	93-100	Superior Effort	C	73	Average Effort
A-	90		C-	70	
B+	87		D+	67	
B	83	Good Effort	D	63	Minimum Effort
B-	80		D-	60	
C+	77		E	0-59	

*Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found in the online catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>*

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

The *only* extra credit offered in this course is providing proof that you have seen a play or musical produced by the Hippodrome Theatre or Florida Players. You can find details on Canvas.

### **CLASS CONDUCT**

Classes of this size demand a mutual respect to function positively. Therefore, there will be no cell phone use (including texting), sleeping, eating, drinking, or doing work for other classes. If you engage in any of these behaviors, you will be ejected. Notes must be taken by hand. Laptops are not allowed in class – they are distracting to other students. However, you can use a tablet to take notes if it lays flat on your desk. At the same time, if you use it for anything other

than taking notes, you will lose the privilege. If you have any special technological needs, you must seek permission from me.

## **HONOR CODE**

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” ***If you cheat on a test or quiz, or plagiarize material, i.e., use someone else's words or ideas without attribution, you will automatically receive a failing grade in this class.*** Ignorance of the definition of plagiarism or the absence of intent to deceive does not constitute an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty.

## **LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations need to register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. If you do not have a disability but feel you need help with your writing, contact <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>.

## **AVAILABILITY**

If you have something you want to discuss with me, feel free to call me or stop by during my office hours. You are never “bothering” me. During these hours, I encourage you to bring drafts of your papers and projects or ask about lecture material. I will be happy to go over your work and suggest improvements. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, see me before or after class and we will come up with another time to meet.

## **EVALUATIONS**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter the syllabus and course outline if necessary.